



## DIVISION OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

[www.doh.sd.gov](http://www.doh.sd.gov)

615 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Pierre, SD 57501

Community Health Services  
Disease Prevention  
Family Health  
Health Promotion  
State Epidemiologist

### HIV/AIDS Fact Sheet

**Office of Disease Prevention**

**(605) 773-3737**

**1-800-592-1861 in South Dakota only**

(Since HIV is spread primarily through sexual practices or by sharing needles, prevention messages on this site address these topics. HIV prevention materials funded by CDC must be approved by local program review panels. However, materials may be considered controversial by some. This material is provided for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical care. We are not able to answer personal medical questions. Please see your health care provider concerning appropriate care, treatment or other medical advice.)

#### **What is HIV/AIDS?**

The cause of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is advanced infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV infection causes progressive damage to the immune system leaving the host susceptible to a number of infections and cancers resulting in AIDS.

#### **Who is at risk for HIV/AIDS?**

Anyone can get AIDS. AIDS cases have been reported from all age groups, all races, in virtually every country in the world. Behaviors which place a person at high risk for HIV infection include:

- unprotected sex, particularly anal sex and/or sex with multiple partners;
- needle sharing among injectable drug users.

People also at risk for HIV transmission include infants born to infected mothers and people whose job places them in contact with blood or other body fluids such as health, emergency, and public safety workers. Transfusion/transplant recipients have a very small risk of infection. Blood and tissues to be used for transplants have been screened for HIV since 1985. Since screening of blood and tissues began, the risk of HIV infection from the sources has been virtually eliminated.

#### **What are the symptoms of AIDS?**

AIDS is a condition that leaves a person open to a number of different infections and cancers. There are nearly thirty indicator diseases of AIDS which each have their own symptoms. Some of the diseases often seen in AIDS patients are: Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia which affects breathing and often results in death, a skin cancer called Kaposi's Sarcoma, and Cytomegalovirus retinitis, a virus that causes loss of vision. People with AIDS may have a number of digestive problems leading to dramatic weight loss called Wasting syndrome.

#### **How soon do symptoms appear?**

People infected with HIV may be free of clinical signs or symptoms for many months to years before the opportunistic infections and clinical symptoms of AIDS appear. As the immune system becomes more dysfunctional, more AIDS diseases develop and the severity of the diseases may increase.

Fifty percent of the people infected with HIV will develop the opportunistic infections and clinical symptoms characteristic of AIDS within 10 years of infection of HIV. The fatality rate of AIDS is very high; even with medical therapy, 80-90% of the patients with AIDS have died within 3-5 years after diagnosis with AIDS.

#### **For how long is a person able to spread HIV?**

A person can spread the virus immediately after becoming infected with HIV. After becoming infected, a person is considered infected for the rest of their life.

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### What is the treatment for AIDS?

There is no known cure or vaccine to prevent infection at this time. There are a number of drug treatments available to treat the numerous diseases of AIDS.

### How can AIDS be prevented?

Abstinence from sex and drugs is the surest way. Limit your number of sex partners, use a condom, don't have sex with someone with AIDS or HIV infection, don't share needles, and use protective equipment if occupied in a health, emergency, or public safety occupation.

### Related Sites

- South Dakota
  - HIV/AIDS Statistics  
<http://doh.sd.gov/Disease/statistics.aspx>
  - HIV/AIDS Testing Sites  
<http://doh.sd.gov/LocalOffices/HIV.aspx>
  - HIV/AIDS Prevention Program  
<http://doh.sd.gov/HIV/default.aspx>
  - Ryan White Title II Care Program (assistance for people with HIV/AIDS)  
<http://doh.sd.gov/RyanWhite/default.aspx>
  - Facts: How you can get HIV infection/AIDS & how you won't  
<http://doh.sd.gov/DiseaseFacts/HIVhow.aspx>
  - Related HIV/AIDS Links  
<http://doh.sd.gov/Disease/Links.aspx#HIV>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention  
<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/default.htm>
  - HIV/AIDS Among American Indians and Alaska Natives  
<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/factsheets/aian.htm>
- More information about HIV/AIDS is also available from the CDC National STD and AIDS Hotlines
  - English: 1-800-342-2437 (AIDS)
  - Spanish: 1-800-344-7432
  - Deaf/Hard of Hearing (TTY): 1-800-243-7889
- Mayo Clinic  
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/hiv-aidsDS00005>